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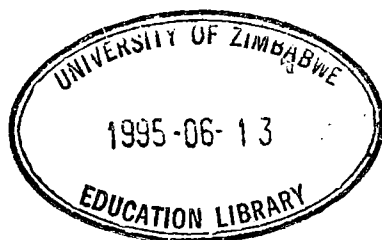
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EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT OF THE BLIND IN ZIMBABWE, 1981-1987 ¹

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INTRODUCTION

The National Disability Survey of Zimbabwe which was conducted by the Department of Social Welfare in conjunction with UNICEF from 19th October to 23rd December, 1981 revealed *inter alia* that: (a) Zimbabwe has a total of 276 300 people with severe disabilities of various types; (Government Printer, 1982, p.30) (b) Of those disabled people of or above school-going age, 52% had never attended school; 17% had been to school for less than two years; 28% had been to school for up to seven years and only a minute fraction of 1% had progressed to or beyond secondary school; (Government Printer 1982 p. 32) (c) the highest single type of disability encountered was that of eye sight with a minimum of 70 000 visually-impaired people of whom 22 700 are totally blind (Government Printer, 1982, p. 30.) and 10 000 are of school-going age (Government Printer, 1982, p. 42).

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- 1 This article is part of a wider study on Rehabilitation of the Disabled and Handicapped People in Zimbabwe since Independence, 1980-1987 which is funded by the Research Board of the University of Zimbabwe. All manuscript references for this article are, unless otherwise stated, from the files of the Council for the Blind (hereafter, CB) Headquarters in Bulawayo.

The above figures clearly demonstrate that blindness is a serious problem in Zimbabwe. This article focuses on the education and employment of the blind in Zimbabwe from 1981 to 1987.

Background 1927-1981

The education of the blind in Zimbabwe was pioneered by missionaries of the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa (now the Reformed Church of Zimbabwe) in order to minister to the needs of the blind in Shona society.

In 1927 Mrs Margaretha Hugo, wife of Rev. H.C. Hugo, started a School for the Blind at Chivi Mission with three pupils. From 1928 it received a Government grant. Enrolment increased from 28 in 1931 to 40 in 1934. In 1939 the School was transferred from Chivi to Capota on Zimuto Mission Farm, about ten miles from Fort Victoria (now Masvingo). It was named after its founder and became known as The Margaretha Hugo School for the Blind. Enrolment increased from 95 in 1953 (W.J. Van der Merwe, 1953, p. 31) to 156 in 1958 (G. Tarugarira, 1986, p. 6). In addition to academic subjects, pupils were taught craftwork including basketry and matmaking for boys, sewing and knitting for girls, music and singing².

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2. Today the subjects taught in primary school include Braille, English, Mathematics, Shona, Environmental and Agricultural Science, Social Studies, Physical Education, Moral and Religious Education, Home Economics, Music, Art and Craft. (Personnal Communication [PC] from Mr D.K. Manhibi, Headmaster, Capota Primary School for the Blind, 16/3/89). (Van der Merwe, 1953, p. 33).

In 1959 the Worcester School for the Deaf in Cape Province, South Africa, donated a Braille machine to Capota with which to make metal sheets for printing Braille books; as a result, in 1960 Capota began to print its own Braille books (Tarugarira, 1986, p. 6). Enrolment increased from 210 in 1963 to 213 in 1965 (CB, Minutes of Meeting, 27/10/65).

In 1976 Capota opened a Secondary School for the Blind with 12 blind pupils - six boys and six girls.³ In 1980 Capota Primary School had a total enrolment of 171 pupils with 15 teachers and one non-teaching Headmaster while the Secondary School had 46 pupils with seven academic and Practical Subject teachers and one typist teacher, Mrs Musakanye, who joined the School at the beginning of the year⁴ (CB, Education Sub-Committee Minutes, 1971-1980; F.E. Dakwa, 1980). Capota is a residential or institutional School for the Blind.

Meanwhile, in 1955 Mr. John Wilson, the then Director of the British Empire Society for the Blind (now Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind) reported on his visit to Rhodesia and recommended the co-ordination of voluntary organizations concerned with blindness. From this was born the Co-ordinating Committee for Blind Welfare - the parent body of the present Council for the Blind which was formed in 1956. The Council's main function initially was prevention of blindness (CB, Constitu-

3 PC, K.T. Munozogara, Principal of Margaretha Hugo Schools and Workshops for the Blind, Capota Mission, 9/5/89.

4 Today the subjects taught in the Secondary School include English Language, English Literature, Biblical Studies, History, Shona, Mathematics, Science, Home Economics, Agriculture, Economics, Touch-typing and Commerce (PC, K.T. Munozongara, 9/5/89).

tion of the Council for the Blind, 1963 as amended in 1970, 1981, 1982, and 1986, p. 1). However, after discovering many blind children of school-going age during the prevention exercise, the Council agreed in principle to introduce 'Open' education.

But it was not until 1962 that the then Senior Education Officer of the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind (RCSB), Mr Geoffrey Salisbury, arrived at Waddilove Training Institution to introduce 'Open' education. The RCSB gave financial assistance for the purpose. Ten students who were doing their final year Teacher Training course, were selected to undergo training as Specialist Teachers of the Blind (W.K. Mdege, 1983, December, pp. 1-2). The training was to last for three months and was to be run annually (G.E. Salisbury, *Waddilove Review*, 1962, October, p. 8).

When the ten students had successfully completed their training in teaching the blind in 1962, one of them, Mr W.K. Mdege, was asked to remain at Waddilove to take charge of the Pilot Scheme. However, after Mr Salisbury returned to England, there was no-one directly responsible for training teachers of the blind. In June, 1965 the RCSB sent Mr J.W. Martin to Rhodesia to continue the work which Mr Salisbury has started. Mr J.W. Martin was able to establish ten dual-purpose schools with a total enrolment of 51 blind children. These were based in Bulawayo, Gokwe, Wankie and Belingwe. In 1966 he established two new Resource Rooms – one at Musume and the other at Lower Gwelo Mission.

In 1968 the Ministry of Education whose interest in 'Open' education had grown over the years, decided to establish the post of Supervisor of the Education of the Blind. The Education Supervisor did not only deal with 'Open' education but also liaised with the Jairos Jiri Association (J. Farquhar, 1987) and the Capota School for the Blind in matters concerning education of the blind (Mdege, 1983, December, p. 3).

Under the 'Open system' of education practised at Waddilove, blind pupils attend a preliminary orientation course in a Resource Room under a Specialist tutor before being integrated with sighted pupils. The Resource Room course covers the fundamentals of Braille, training in mobility, Grade One material and recreational activities. The course lasts according to the progress of the child. At the end of it, the tutor sets a test upon which the recommendation for integration with sighted children, is based. Integration takes place from Grade Two. As the blind child's textbooks are written in Braille, the tutor supervises his/her assignments in the Resources Room. When integration has commenced, the blind child shares dormitory accommodation with sighted children, attends the same mural activities as far as possible and is subject to the same discipline. The first blind pupils to be admitted into Waddilove under 'Open System' of education in 1962 were Langton Madambi, Jacob Muchenjero and Mambo Maposa. In 1963 Godfrey Chiunda joined them and Mr Mdege was employed on the permanent Staff of the Blind Unit Department. The increasing need of this Department necessitated the appointment of another member of staff, Miss Susan Mapondera in 1965 (*Waddilove Review*, 1969, pp. 1-2).

In 1966 the Blind Unit Department at Waddilove had 12 blind children (*Waddilove Review*, November, 1966, p. 10) and integration was working well. In 1968 Godfrey Chiunda received prizes for being not only first in a class of sighted children but also first in English (*Waddilove Review*, November, 1968, p. 3). In 1969 the first blind boys to be admitted into Waddilove completed their primary education (*Waddilove Review*, 1969, p. 1).

Because blind students who had successfully completed their primary education at Waddilove had nowhere else to go for secondary education, Waddilove negotiated with the Ministry of Education for the establishment of a secondary School Resource Room at Waddilove. Since Waddilove had pioneered 'Open' education and had gained enough experience, the Ministry of Education granted it permission to admit blind students for secondary education (Mdege, 1983, December, p. 3.).

In 1979 there were ten blind students at Waddilove Secondary School. Of these, three were in Form 1 – Clemence Mupasi, Zephaniah Matanga and Porunoza Moyo; three were in Form 2 – Jethro Gumbo, Ishmael Dube and Ancelimo Magaya; two were in Form 3 – Abiot Moyo and Vengesai Mugwinyi and two were in Form 4 – Rosewetter Munatsi and Sobala Ncube (Mdege, 8 June, 1988). In 1980 Waddilove was the only educational Institution with a Secondary School Resource Centre (*Waddilove Review*, 1980, p. 28) while there were seven primary schools in Zimbabwe where 'Open' education was taking place (J. Addison, 1989, p. 6).

In 1980 the Jairos Jiri Association started building a School for the Blind at Gatooma (now Kadoma). The construction of the school was made possible through financial support from several sources as a result of the untiring fund-raising efforts of Mr Jairos Jiri both in Zimbabwe and abroad.

On 24th October, 1981 the Gatooma School for the Blind was officially opened by the then Minister of Labour and Social Services, Mr Kumbirai Kangai, accompanied by the then Minister of Education and Culture, Dr Dzingai Mutumbuka (JJA, 24 October, 1981).

Thus by 1981 there were two residential schools for the Blind in Zimbabwe – Capota and the Jairos Jiri Gatooma School for the Blind. In the following section, I will discuss the education of and prospects for employment for the blind in Zimbabwe from 1981 to 1987.

THE ROLE OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE BLIND IN THE EDUCATION OF THE BLIND IN ZIMBABWE, 1981-1987

Since its formation in 1956 the Council for the Blind has played a crucial role in the education of the Blind in Zimbabwe.

Firstly, it has transcribed textbooks into Braille for blind pupils for nationwide distribution. In April, 1965 it started to transcribe several primary school textbooks; (CB Minute Book 1961-69, p. 1)⁵; by the end of August, 1965 it had transcribed several other primary school textbooks (CB Minute Book 1961-69).⁶ By December, 1979 it had transcribed, in addition to primary school textbooks, an 'A' level Shona textbook; reading material on Law for a blind student who was studying for the Bachelor of Law-Degree at the University of Zimbabwe, and assisted in transcribing final examination questions for Grades 7, 9, 11 and the Rhodesia Junior Certificate (Mdege, 20 June 1980, pp 2-3).⁷

By the end of March, 1982 the Council had transcribed, in addition to primary school textbooks, three 'O' level English Literature textbooks; one 'O' level Shona textbook and one Shona Literature textbook for University level. In addition, it duplicated 900 volumes and distributed them to various schools and

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- 5 The Braille books produced were: Standard 1 Shona Reader, Standard II Shona Reader, Standard III Arithmetic, Standard II History, Tonga Primer, 'Chipele', A Sub-B Sindebele Reader 'Sengicathwa'.
 - 6 The books transcribed were as follows: Sub-A Sindebele Reader, Standard II English Reader in 4 volumes, Standard II Geography and Standard III English Reader.
 - 7 The following books were transcribed: Grade 4 - *Lets Go for English*; 'A' level - *Zwakwawabva*, *Children Protection and Adoption Act*, *The Marriage Act*; *Law of Delict Synopsis and Lectures on Law*.

Resource Centres (Mdege, 26 March 1982, p. 3).⁸ By July, 1982 the Council and Capota were sharing the printing of Braille textbooks. The Ministry of Education provided a grant for the purpose. The Council concentrated on production of Braille textbooks for 'Open' education both at primary and secondary school levels (Mdege, July 1982, pp. 1; 3). In 1985 it ordered from the United States and Britain various items of Braille equipment worth \$36 000 through a grant which the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) gave to the Council through the Ministry of Education (Mdege, 1985, 31 December, p. 3).⁹ During the year, the Council duplicated a total of 1,015 volumes and distributed them to various schools and Resource Rooms. In addition, it transcribed 25 textbooks ranging from Grade One up to University level (Mdege, 1985, 31 December, p. 4).

Secondly, it encourages Responsible School Authorities especially in areas where incidence of blindness is high, to accept the idea of integration of blind and sighted pupils in their schools.

Thirdly, it has formed a partnership with Responsible School Authorities whereby it provides all the roofing materials, window and door-frames as well as cement and paint to any Responsible

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- 8 The books transcribed were as follows: Grade 1-4 - *Lets Do Maths*; Grade 7 - *Maths Revision Book*; 'O' level English Literature textbooks - *Julius Caesar*; *To Kill a Mocking Bird* and *Animal Farm*; One 'O' level Shona textbook - *Kumuzinda Hakuna Weko*; one Shona literature textbook for University level - *Kusasana Kunoparira*.
- 9 Part of the consignment of the goods which were ordered in 1985 as a result of this grant were received in 1987. They consisted of 50 portable type-writers, 50 tape recorders and 99 blank cassettes. (See CB, W.K. Mdege, 'Education Report,' 1988, March, p. 2).

School Authority which agrees in principle to offer facilities to establish a Resource Room. In turn, the Responsible Authority moulds enough bricks to construct the Resource Room and to pay the labourers (Mdege, 1988, April, p. 3). As a result of this joint-effort program, the Council built and completed four Resource Rooms attached to Government Primary Schools in Kadoma at a cost of \$38 935.18 and handed them over to the Ministry of Education in 1983 (Mdege, 1985, 31 December, p. 3).

Fourthly, in 1987 it assisted seven primary schools and three secondary schools which cater for the education of the blind and the Jairos Jiri Association's Pumula Hostel in Bulawayo with a total of \$67,734.31 (Mdege, 1988, 25-27 April, p. 4).

Fifthly, it has launched a sponsorship scheme whereby it requests individuals and groups of people to sponsor blind children attending school in Zimbabwe by donating \$30 or more which will be spent to extra comforts for blind children. In addition to local sponsorship, the Council has initiated through the RCSB, an Overseas Sponsorship Scheme whereby friends abroad sponsor blind children attending school in Zimbabwe.

THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN THE EDUCATION OF THE BLIND IN ZIMBABWE, 1981-1987

The Government has played an active role in the education of blind pupils in Zimbabwe especially in the training of, and in organizing vacation courses for, specialist teachers of the blind.

Due to political problems emanating from Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965, the RCSB withdrew its representatives from Rhodesia and discontinued the training course for teachers of the blind at Waddilove.

From 1969 to 1979 specialist teachers of the blind in Rhodesia were trained at Montfort College in Malawi for a period of 18 months. By the time Zimbabwe became independent in 1980,

Montfort College had trained 11 Zimbabwean Specialist Teachers of the blind (CB, Chairman's Report 1980-1981, p. 3). By 1981 it had trained 13. (Tapela, 1984, p. 10).

After independence, the Ministry of Education and Culture gave a high priority to Special Education. In 1981 it provided grants to ten schools which practised 'Open' or integrated education. It also sent an official to Nairobi to represent Zimbabwe at a UNESCO Seminar on Special Education for countries of Central and East Africa (Mutumbuka, 1981, pp. 1-2).

From 4th to 8th May, 1981 the Ministry of Education held a vacation course for teachers of the Blind at Hillside Teachers' College, Bulawayo which was attended by 23 teachers drawn from Capota, Jairos Jiri Gatooma School for the Blind and several Resource Centres. The course was conducted by Brother Rudolf van Oudheusden, RCSB Regional Representative, assisted by Mr. B. Mbweza, Director of Education of the Blind, Malawi; Mr S.E. Mtambalika, Mobility Instructor, Montfort College, Malawi and Mr F.G.H. Tooze, Education Consultant of RCSB. Others who attended the course included: Mr and Mrs Earl from King George VI Memorial School, Bulawayo; Mrs J. Saunders from Hlekweni Training Centre; Mr J.W. Martin, Deputy Head, John Slaven School, Bulawayo; Mr C.H. Tapela, District Education Officer (Special Education) based in Gwelo and representatives from the Ministry of Education and Culture. The packed program included: a lecture on eye diseases by Dr A.O. Pugh, Provincial Medical Officer of Health, Matabeleland; a lecture on Mathematics for the Blind by Mr Tooze and a lecture on Residential Schools and Open Education by Brother Rudolf van Oudheusden. The course was officially closed by Mr R.N. Tanyongana, Regional Director (Matabeleland), Ministry of Education and Culture (Mdege, May 1981, pp. 1-6).

After Independence, the new Government embarked on a national teacher training program in order to extend and expand education of visually-handicapped children throughout Zimbabwe.

The Government launched the National teacher training program at the United College of Education, Bulawayo, in January, 1983. The one-year course is designed for trained teachers with five 'O' level subjects who have at least two years of teaching experience. The course enables the trainees to adapt their existing skills to the needs of visually-impaired pupils and equips them with additional specialist techniques. The course leads to the award of a Special Certificate in Education by the University of Zimbabwe. The specialist students are integrated with students doing the regular teachers' course in such subjects as general educational psychology, sociology and philosophy which are conducted by regular college lecturers. In addition, three specialist lecturers take the students separately in courses on mobility, craftwork, eye diseases and visual handicaps, daily living skills, methodology of teaching the handicapped, and the reading, writing and transcription of books into Braille. Emphasis is given on ways of utilizing the children's remaining senses (auditory, haptic, olfactory and kinaesthetic) in classroom teaching. In craftwork, the trainee teachers learn how to make various tactile apparatus which they will use for pre-reading and pre-writing exercises to develop the children's manual dexterity and conceptual understanding. The course covers instruction in orientation, sighted-guide techniques, and in such other mobility techniques as the use of the long cane. The trainee teachers are required to master these techniques and skills so that they can teach and pass them on to visually-handicapped pupils to enable them to become independent in their day-to-day operations (Tapela, 1984, p. 10).

From 19th to 24th August, 1985, the Ministry of Education held a vacation course at the United College of Education which was attended by 31 specialist teachers of the visually handicapped drawn from various schools and Resource Centres. The course was conducted by representatives from the RCSB and Montfort College and was officially opened by the Deputy Secretary for Teacher Education, Mr Q. Bhila (Mdege 31 December 1985, p. 3).

In April, 1987 the Ministry of Education held a two-day in-service course for teachers of the blind at Seke Teachers' College in Harare. According to Mr Mdege, the Education Liaison Officer, Council for the Blind, the course was a success and the teachers benefitted (Mdege, July 1987, p. 4).

The Ministry of Education continued to train teachers of the visually handicapped. In 1987, 13 teachers were taking the one-year course at the United College of Education. They all successfully completed their training and were deployed in various schools and Resource Centres. In 1988, 14 teachers were undergoing training at the United College of Education (Mdege, March 1988, p. 1). Altogether, by April, 1988 according to Mr Francis E. Dakwa, 101 specialist teachers had gone through the training program (Dakwa, April 1988, p. 3).

Finally, the Ministry of Education pays in full the salaries of Specialist Teachers.

Enrolment of Blind Students in Zimbabwe, 1981-1987

After independence, the Government embarked on a wide-ranging program to expand secondary and university education to meet the expectations of the majority of the people for a better life. This expansion included the education of the blind. In this section, I will consider the enrolment of blind students in Zimbabwe at the primary, secondary and university levels from 1981 to 1987.

The following Tables illustrate the enrolment of blind students in Zimbabwe between 1981 and 1987.

TABLE 1
ENROLMENT 1981

(CB, Chairman's Report 1981-82, AGM, 1982, p. 5)

Open Schools (Primary)	79
Capota Primary	205
JJ (Primary)	77
Waddilove - Open (Secondary)	10
Capota Secondary	59
Gokomere Secondary	3
University of Zimbabwe	2
Total	435

TABLE 2
ENROLMENT, 1982

(Mdege, 11 March 1982, p. 3)

Capota Primary	229
Capota Secondary	107
Wadillove Primary	12
Wadillove Secondary	10
JJ Rimuka School	90
Mrewa Resource Centre	13
Musume Resource Centre	15
Masase Resource Centre	15
Mnene Resource Centre	15
Lower Gwelo Resource Centre	6

St. Bernard's Resource Centre	6
Mtshabezi Resource Centre	5
Solusi Resource Centre	5
Gokomere Resource Centre	3
University of Zimbabwe	3
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Total	534
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TABLE 3
ENROLMENT 1983

(Mdege, 8 April 1983, p. 3)

Waddilove Primary	13
Waddilove Secondary	10
Musume Primary	15
Mnene Mission	15
Masase Mission	15
Lower Gwelo Mission	12
Mrewa Mission	14
Mtshabezi Mission	8
St. Bernard's Primary	8
Solusi Mission	8
Munyaradzi Primary	6
Gokomere High School	5
University of Zimbabwe	4
Capota Primary	229
Capota Secondary	107
Jairos Jiri School	101
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Total	570
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TABLE 4
ENROLMENT, 1985

(CB, Chairman's Annual Report, 13 September 1986, p.3)

Primary level	168
Secondary level	30
High School - 'A' level	6
Teachers' College level	6
Residential Schools	420
University level	4
Totals	634

TABLE 5
ENROLMENT, 1987

(CB, Chairman's Annual Report, 26 September 1987, p. 5)

Primary level	181
Secondary level	64
High School - 'A' level	5
Teachers' Training Colleges	6
University of Zimbabwe	7
Residential Schools	424
Total	687

It is evident from the above tables that the enrolment of blind students in Zimbabwe increased rapidly between 1981 and 1987.

Expansion of and Problems at Resource Centres, 1980-1987

As the enrolment of blind students increased, there was a corresponding need for more Resource Rooms. In this section, I will consider, firstly the establishment of more Resource Rooms; secondly, the problems encountered at the Resource Rooms and thirdly, the philosophy and results of integration.

In 1980 two Resource Rooms were opened – one at Mtshabezi Primary School in Gwanda District and the other at St Bernard's Primary School in Bulawayo (Mdege, January 1985, p. 2). The Mtshabezi Primary School Resource Room started with three blind pupils (Madlela, 1989, 13 June). This brought the number of Resource Rooms to ten (CB, Chairman's Report, 1980-81: AGM, p. 3).

In August, 1981 a new Resource Room was opened at Solusi Primary School by Mr J.L. Nkomo who had been trained as a Specialist teacher of the blind at Montfort College, Malawi, in 1980/81 (Mdege, 26 March 1982, p. 2).

In 1984 three new Resource Rooms were opened - one at Chegato, another at Lower Gweru Mission and the third at Mzilikazi Secondary School in Bulawayo. (Mdege, January 1985, p. 2). This increased the number of Resource Rooms from 11 to 16 (Mdege 1985, p. 1).

In 1985 two new Resource Centres were opened – one at Mrewa Secondary School and the other at Masvingo Primary School. This brought the number of Resource Rooms to 18 (Mdege, 1985, p. 2).

In January, 1986 three new Resource Rooms were opened – one at Rukau Primary School in Mutoko, another at Bondolfi Primary School and the third at Beit Bridge Primary School. The Rukau Primary School Resource Room started with three blind children

from the Mrewa Centre. By the end of the year, the number had increased to five including two partially-sighted orphans from All Souls Mission. The Resource Room was built through the joint effort of the Council for the Blind which supplied all the building material and the local parents who made bricks and paid the builder (Marumbwa, 1989, 12 June). The Bondolfi Primary School Resource Room started with four blind pupils - one boy and three girls. During the year, another pupil arrived to make a total of five. Initially, according to the Resource Room teacher, Mr Austin Siwardi, there was a problem of recruitment of blind children since the Resource Centre 'was new and not known at all'. 'However', he added, 'we got publicity through the Press and we also got in touch with the Rehabilitation staff at hospitals, especially St Anthony's Hospital in Zaka and the Jairos Jiri Association who did the recruiting and recommended pupils to us. There was an overwhelming response from the Staff of the School and the community around over the establishment of the Resource Room. Donations from the Staff, individuals and companies enabled the Centre to stand on its feet'¹⁰. The Beit Bridge Primary School Resource Room started with six blind pupils - four girls and two boys (Makhurane, 1989, 18 June).

By July, 1987 a total of 37 Resource Centres had been established in Zimbabwe as illustrated in Table 6.

10 The enrolment increased from 5 in 1986 to 13 in 1987. PC, A. Siwardi, 1989, 12 June).

TABLE 6
RESOURCE CENTRES, JULY 1987

(Mdege, July 1987, p. 1)

Primary School Resource Rooms	19
Secondary School Resource Rooms	8
Residential Schools	2
High Schools	4
Teacher Training Colleges	3
University of Zimbabwe	1

Total	37
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Resource Rooms have encountered several problems. The most common problem is lack of adequate equipment. According to the Headmaster of Beit Bridge Primary School, Mr M. Makhurane, this is a serious problem. A lot of equipment, he says, has been improvised by the Specialist teacher who sits down at night to transcribe books for pupils Grade by Grade and Subject by Subject (Makhurane, 1989, 18 June). The Headmaster of Rukau Primary School, Mr T Marumbwa, says that although the Council for the blind supplies the School with writing equipment, the School has been hard hit by the shortage of Braille paper for transcribing books. 'Mathematical equipment', he says, 'is really a problem because improvising is difficult ... our children have tended to hate Mathematics because of the lack of equipment' (Marumbwa, 12 June, 1989). The Specialist teacher at Mtshabezi Primary School, Mr M.M. Madlela, says tht the Resource Room has only one Braille machine and a few hand-writing frames. 'Pupils', he says 'would benefit if they had some tape recorders'. He says that the Council for the Blind is doing a lot in assisting the School in getting some of the needed equipment. He added that even if the School had some money to buy some of the needed materials, the problem is that some of this equip-

ment is only obtained from overseas (Madlela, 13 June 1989). The Specialist teacher at Bondolfi Primary School, Mr A, Siwardi, says equipment is very difficult to obtain. He added:

Most of the equipment writing equipment, Mathematical instruments, for example Taylor Frames, Cuberrithems, abacuses, Braille paper, is not available on the local market. It has got to be imported and the Council for the Blind does this. In most cases, we have got to wait for a long time before we get even a little of this or none at all. Therefore we are forced to go without or to improvise with the little we have. For example, we use ordinary newsprint paper instead of the scarce proper Braille paper. We could import the equipment on individual basis but through lack of funds and other facilities, we just cannot. Other equipment very useful to the blind, for example, cassette players/recorders, cassettes, ordinary touch typewriters, available on the local market, is very expensive to procure. Books are also difficult to obtain, especially textbooks. These are brailled at the Council for the Blind but many times we do not get what we want, perhaps through shortage of braillion paper or through books constantly changing to suit syllabi adopted and the Council will not have these in stock. It would have been better if we brailled books on our own but we do not have the facilities. We have, however, joined several libraries for the blind and these keep us supplied with other reading material (Siwardi, 1989, 12 June).

The Headmaster/Specialist teacher of Solusi Primary School, Mr J.L. Nkomo, says lack of adequate equipment, high import duties and lack of textbooks for the children are the main problems facing the Resource Room. The Council for the Blind, he added,

'cannot produce enough books to meet the demand' (Nkomo, 1989, 15 June).

The second problem is the everchanging school textbooks. According to the Specialist teacher at Waddilove Primary School, Mr E.T. Munemo, the everchanging textbooks 'almost on a yearly basis, make it very difficult for the Resource Room to cope particularly when it comes to brailleing or writing the books in Braille' (Munemo, 1989, 1 June).

The third problem is the lack of adequate financial support. The Resource Room teacher at Bondolfi Primary School, Mr A. Siwardi, says the School has no fixed source of income. He added:

We survive mainly on donations from individuals, religious and social groups, donors from outside the country, companies and the Municipality of Masvingo. Donations are not a reliable source of income to keep us operating effectively because of the inconsistency involved and many times we are faced with quite a grim situation as it becomes very difficult even to feed the children... In 1987 we introduced a scheme for parents to pay fees of \$25 a term but only one of the parents could afford to pay the fees (Swardi, 12 June 1989).

In spite of these problems, integration has worked very well. According to the *Waddilove Review* of 1969, 'Open' or integrated education has four advantages.

Firstly, it confers on the blind child the freedom of enrolling in the institution of his training at any time during the year since his first lessons are in the Resource Room, where no inconvenience is caused by late arrival... Secondly, the blind child is exposed to the sighted world, is given

reasonable chance of competing in it on equal terms, and taught not to over-regret his lack of sight... Thirdly, the sighted child is given an opportunity to adopt a sensible and not too indulgent attitude to the handicapped. And finally, the community as a whole is brought face to face with the needs and potentials of the blind (*Waddilove Review*, 1969, p. 2).

In his Report of 1983, the Education Liaison Officer of the Council for the Blind, Mr W.K. Mdege, said that integration is a new educational approach based on the fact that a blind child is first a child and therefore should not be isolated from his sighted counterparts and that free integration with sighted children gives courage and self-reliance to blind children. He added:

It also encourages them to have many sighted friends and ... to acquire the necessary ability and confidence. Not only does it help the blind, but it also assists the sighted to have a more sensible attitude towards the blind... It is a social and educational advantage of the blind child being brought into contact with fully-sighted children in the ordinary school (Mdege, 1983, p.2; Mdege, 1985, p. 45).

These views have been fully justified by events. According to the Resource Room teacher at Waddilove Primary school, Mr E.T. Munemo, visually-handicapped pupils have 'integrated very well with their sighted counterparts' (Munemo, 1989, 1 June). The Headmaster of Bciti Bridge Primary School, Mr M. Makhurane, said integration has worked very well and that there is no difference between the sighted pupils and the blind in class and outside. He added that blind children do 'very well in their class work. They are able to walk anywhere in the school without any help from other school pupils' (Makhurane, 1989, 18 June). The Specialist teacher at Mtshabezi Primary School, Mr M.M. Madlela, said that blind children have integrated well with the sighted children. He added that blind children are

sometimes 'disadvantaged when they don't have suitable textbooks. In most cases, the sighted pupils are willing to help the blind ones. I have not heard any reports of bullying or maltreatment. On the whole, I feel that the blind children enjoy working with their sighted friends and compete well in their everyday class work' (Madlela, 1989, 13 June). The Headmaster of Rukau Primary School has had a similar experience. 'On the whole', he wrote 'we can say our blind kids are integrating very well with their sighted counterparts and this can be witnessed through several activities like in Music. Our blind children are in the School Choir and they have a lot of friends always willing to assist them when they encounter problems. On the whole, we are pleased to say that integration seems to be going on smoothly at our school' (Marumbwa, 1989, 12 June). Finally, the Specialist teacher at Bondolfi Primary School, Mr A. Siwardi said that integration of the blind pupils with the sighted, has so far gone very well. He added:

At first we had a problem of acceptance but through various education methods, the blind pupils were fully accepted among their sighted counterparts. In this way they have gained respect and credibility among their peers, making the task of integration easy. I think the task of integration should begin as early as possible. Even a very young blind child should be introduced to the system of integration at that early age to make the whole process easier (Siwardi, 1989, 12 June).

The success of integration was best summed up by Mr Abiot Moyo, a Form 2 blind student at Waddilove Secondary School in 1979. 'The secondary education for the blind', he wrote, 'seemed difficult at the beginning. Complications arose in Mathematics and Science. It was not because the blind were unable to construct angles but that the teachers doubted their ability since they were blind ... Despite the fact that we are blind, we never

feel inferior. We are always at ease and enjoy ourselves a lot with our sighted friends' (Moyo, *Waddilove Review*, 1980, p. 28).

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION, 1979-1987

Resource Centres for blind students are not confined to primary and secondary schools only. In 1979 a Resource Centre was established at the University of Zimbabwe. (Mdege, January 1985, p. 2). In this section, I will consider firstly, the problems encountered by blind students studying at the University of Zimbabwe and how some of these problems have been solved and secondly, the most successful blind students who not only managed to gain admission into the University of Zimbabwe but also managed successfully to complete their studies.

The problems faced by blind students at the University of Zimbabwe are legion. Firstly, they depend on lectures (which they record) and handouts (which are read to them by a friend or fellow student). Secondly, they rely on listening to their recordings of lectures and texts or have someone read to them. Thirdly, braille paper is in short supply and can only be obtained from the Council for the Blind in Bulawayo. Fourthly, cassette tapes which are used to record lectures are expensive. Because each blind student is given only three cassettes per year and the price is very high, a blind student's grant does not allow him/her to buy many additional tapes. This means that material recorded must be continually erased to make room for more. Fifthly, before 1986 there was very little braille reading material in the Main Library (Addison, June 1986, p. 26).

In 1986 a group of concerned people in the Faculty of Arts began working on some of these problems. The Department of African Languages and Literature established a cassette library of some 21 titles for use by blind students. The tapes were donated by the Rotary Club and the recordings were organized by Dr Herbert Chimhundu. In the Department of English, again with the help of the Rotary Club and Rotary Anns, 11 titles became available on cassettes under the care of Dr Zhuwarara. In ad-

dition, Mrs J. Addison in the Communication Skills Centre has been recording handouts and parts of textbooks on demand for any blind student since the beginning of the 1986 academic year. In May, 1986 the Faculty of Arts authorised the purchase of 20 blank cassettes for use by blind students. It also authorised the establishment of a Reading Centre for blind students. The Department of Law also established a tape library for its blind students (Addison, June 1986. p. 27). By December, 1986 there were 178 braille library books available in the Reading Centre in the subject areas of History, Philosophy, Classics and Religious Studies. These were obtained from Braille Libraries abroad. By October, 1986 the Reading Centre had its own cassette library of recordings covering whole books, parts of books, pamphlets, handouts, tests and examinations in the subject areas of History, Philosophy, Psychology, Classics and Literature. By December, 1986 there were 148 recorded cassettes in the Reading Centre excluding recordings held by the Departments of English and African Languages and Literature (Addison, December 1986, p. 17).

Partly because of these facilities and partly through sheer hard work, several blind students graduated from the University of Zimbabwe between 1981 and 1987. The most outstanding of these students were Pearson Nherere, Rosewetter Munatsi, Timothy Mudarikwa, Rudo Moyo, Abiot Moyo and Sobala Ncube. The following are profiles of these students.

Mr Pearson Nherere was born in Bikita District, Masvingo Province, on 18th November, 1960 (Gokomere Secondary School Files [GSSF] 1977). He lost his sight as a young child after contracting measles. He did primary education at the Jairos Jiri Centre in Bulawayo and at the Naran Centre in Gwelo (*Herald*, 9 February 1982). In 1973 the Beit Trust awarded him a bursary to enable him to pursue secondary education. He did secondary education (Forms 1 to 4) at Waddilove Secondary School (1973-1976) (JJA, 1972-77) and sat for the Cambridge School Certificate ('O' level) examinations at Waddilove in November, 1976. He passed the

Cambridge School Certificate examination in Division 1 (GSSF, 1977).

On 3rd March, 1977, the Principal of Gokomere, Fr Furer informed the Chairman of the Education Sub-Committee of the Council for the Blind, Dr Ashton, that he had reserved a place for Form 5 for Pearson Nherere at Gokomere Secondary School. (GSSF, 3 March 1977) The Council for the Blind was responsible for Pearson's fees at Gokomere (GSSF, 1977, 3 June). Pearson performed well at Gokomere (1977-1978) and passed the Cambridge Higher School Certificate ('A' level) examinations in Division 1 (University of Zimbabwe, Faculty of Law, 1979). In 1979 Pearson was accepted into the University of Zimbabwe and enrolled for the Bachelor of Law Honours Degree in the University's Faculty of Law.

In his first year at the University of Zimbabwe in 1979, Pearson took the following courses in the Faculty of Law: Contract Law, Commercial Law, Legal Systems, Constitutional Law, History of Roman-Dutch Law and British Law. In his second year in 1980 he took the following courses: Property Law, African Customary Law and Family Law. In his third year in 1981 he took the following courses: Jurisprudence, Conflict of Laws, Public International Law, Company Law, Insurance Law and Law of Succession. He passed the Bachelor of Law Degree with a 1st class Honours in the examination held in November, 1981 (University of Zimbabwe, Faculty of Law, 1981). Not only was Pearson the first blind student to be admitted to the University of Zimbabwe; he was the only one to have obtained a First Class Pass mark in every paper written during the three-year Bachelor of Law Degree course. In an interview with *The Herald*, the then Academic Registrar of the University of Zimbabwe, Mr Geoff Chittenden, described Pearson's achievements as 'absolutely outstanding'. He added, 'It would be hard to imagine any student excelling Pearson's record of top marks for every single paper he wrote during the three-year period' (*Herald*, 9 February 1986). Mr G. Feltoe, Senior Lecturer in the Faculty of Law who taught Pearson in his first and second year, was

of the same opinion. He said Pearson was 'phenomenal' and 'fantastic', with a 'brilliant and analytical mind' and described the quality of his work as 'superlative' (Feltoe, 1988, 19 January).

After graduating at the University of Zimbabwe on 15th May, 1982, (University of Zimbabwe, Graduation, 1982, 15 May) Pearson was awarded an overseas scholarship to study for the Master of Law Degree at the University of Cambridge (1982-1983) and passed with a First Class. He returned to Zimbabwe in September, 1983 and was offered the post of Teaching Assistant in the Faculty of Law at the University of Zimbabwe (September, 1983 - September 1985) after which he proceeded to Oxford University to do a Bachelor of Civil Law Degree (September, 1985 - September, 1987) and passed with a Second Class Honours. He returned to Zimbabwe in October, 1987 and was offered the post of Lecturer in Law in the Faculty of Law at the University of Zimbabwe where he is currently lecturing in Law (Feltoe, 1988, 19 January).

Miss Rosewetter Munatsi was born in Mvuma, Chirumanzu District, Midlands Province, on 16th March 1963 in a family of two brothers and five sisters. She did primary education (Grades 1 to 7) at Capota School for the Blind (1970-1976) and secondary education (Forms 1 to 4) at Waddilove Secondary School (1977-1980). While at Waddilove, she was Secretary of the Debating Club. (GSSF, 1981-82).

On 22nd September, 1980 Rosewetter applied to the Principal of Gokomere Secondary School for admission into Gokomere to do Form 5 (GSSF, 1981-82). In November, 1980 she sat for the Cambridge School Certificate ('O' level) examinations and passed in Division 1 (GSSF, 1981).

Rosewetter did the Cambridge Higher School Certificate ('A' level) at Gokomere Secondary School (1981-1982) and passed her final examinations held in November, 1982 (University of Zimbabwe files [UZF] 1983). In 1983 she was admitted into the Univer-

sity of Zimbabwe to study for the Bachelor of Arts General Degree in the Faculty of Arts. She passed her Bachelor of Arts Degree in the final examinations held in November, 1985 with a Lower Second Class (UZF, 1985, 3 December).

In 1986 she taught at the Girls' High School in Harare. In 1987 she married Mr Timothy Mudarikwa (see below) in Harare after which she and her husband transferred to Capota Secondary School for the Blind where they are currently teaching.

Mr Timothy Mudarikwa was born in Gutu District, Masvingo Province, on 9th July 1961 in a family of two brothers and five sisters. He did Grades 1 to 3 at Jairos Jiri Nguboyenja Centre in Bulawayo (1969-1971) and Grades 4 to 7 under the 'Open System' of Education at Muunga School near Gwelo (1972-1975) (GSSF, 1980, 18 February). The Beit Trust awarded him a bursary to enable him to do secondary education. In 1976 he enrolled for Form 1 at Waddilove Secondary School (JJA, B/2, 1971-82) and passed the Rhodesia Junior Certificate (RJC) examination in 1977 (WSSF, 1977). In 1979 he sat for the Cambridge School Certificate ('O' level) examinations and passed. In 1980 he was accepted into Gokomere Secondary School to do the Cambridge Higher School Certificate ('A' level) under the sponsorship of the Jairos Jiri Association which paid his school fees (GSSF, 1981). He passed his final examinations held in November 1981.

In 1982 Timothy was accepted into the University of Zimbabwe to study for the Bachelor of Arts General Degree in the Faculty of Arts. He passed his three-year Degree course in the final examinations held in November, 1984 with a Lower Second Class (UZF, 1984).

Mr Rudo Moyo was born on 12th December, 1961 in Belingwe District, Midlands Province, in a family of nine sisters. He did Grades 1 to 5 at Makeren Primary School, Belingwe (1969-1973) and Grades 6 to 7 at Masase Mission, Belingwe (1974-1975)

(GSSF, 21 February 1980). The Beit Trust awarded him a bursary to enable him to do secondary education. In 1976 he enrolled for Form 1 at Waddilove Secondary School (JJA, B/2, 1971-82). He passed the Rhodesia Junior Certificate (RJC) examinations in 1977 (WSSF, 1977). In November, 1979 he sat for the Cambridge School Certificate ('O' level) examinations and passed (UZF, History Department 1982). In 1980 he was accepted into Gokomere Secondary School to do the Cambridge Higher School Certificate ('A' level) under the sponsorship of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Rhodesia which paid his school fees (GSSF 24 September 1980; 20 March 1981; 21 March 1981). In November, 1981 he sat for his final examinations and passed (UZ, History Department, 1982). In 1982 Rudo was accepted into the University of Zimbabwe to study for the Bachelor of Arts General Degree in the Faculty of Arts. He passed his three-year Degree course in the examinations held in November, 1984 with a Third Class (UZF, Faculty of Arts, 1984).

Mr Abiot Moyo was born in Belingwe District, Midlands Province, on 25th January, 1958 in a family of four brothers. He did primary education (Grades 1 to 7) at Mucheke Primary School in Masvingo (1967-1973) and secondary education (Forms 1 to 4) at Chegato Secondary School (1974-1977). In 1975 he sat for the Rhodesia Junior Certificate (RJC) examinations and passed with flying colours (GSSF, 1975). In November, 1977 he sat for the Cambridge School Certificate ('O' level) examinations and passed (UZF, History Department, 1985). In 1978 he was accepted into Gokomere Secondary School to do the Cambridge Higher School Certificate ('A' level) under the sponsorship of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Rhodesia, the Christian Council of Rhodesia, (GSSF, 1978, 1 March) and the International University Exchange Fund (GSSF, 1978, 18 May). In November, 1979 he sat for his final examinations and passed (UZF, History Department, 1985).

In 1985 Abiot was accepted into the University of Zimbabwe to study for the Bachelor of Arts General Degree in the Faculty of Arts. He passed his three-year Degree course in the final

examinations held in November, 1987, with a Lower Second Class (UZ, Faculty of Arts, 1987).

Miss Sobala Ncube was born in Que Que on 24th January, 1962 in a family of six sisters. She did primary education (Grades 1 to 7) at Muunga Government School (1970-1976). The Beit Trust awarded her a bursary to enable her to do secondary education. In 1977 she enrolled for Form 1 at Waddilove Secondary School. (JJA Beit Trust General Correspondence, 1971-82). In 1978 she sat for the Rhodesia Junior Certificate (RJC) examinations and passed (WSSF, 1978). In November, 1980 she sat for the Cambridge School Certificate ('O' level) examinations and passed (UZ, 1984). In 1981 she was accepted into Gokomerc Secondary School to do the Cambridge Higher School Certificate ('A' level) on a Beit Trust bursary (JJA, B/2 1971-82). In November, 1983 she sat for her final examinations and passed.

In 1984 Sobala was accepted into the University of Zimbabwe to study for the Bachelor of Arts General Degree in the Faculty of Arts. She passed her three-year Degree course in the final examinations held in November, 1986 with a Lower Second Class. (UZ, Faculty of Arts, 1986, 16 December). She graduated at the University of Zimbabwe on 29th May, 1987 (UZ Graduation Ceremony, 1987, 29 May).

EMPLOYMENT OF BLIND PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL LEAVERS IN ZIMBABWE, 1981-1987

While it has been relatively easy for blind graduates from the University of Zimbabwe to find employment, mostly in the teaching profession, the same cannot be said of primary and secondary school leavers. In this section, I will consider the prospects for employment for blind primary and secondary school leavers in Zimbabwe between 1981 and 1987.

According to the Principal of Capota Secondary School, Mr K.T. Munozogara, over 200 blind students graduated from Capota Secon-

dary School since 1980. Of these, eight successfully completed the Teachers' Certificate Course with the University of Zimbabwe and are currently teaching at conventional schools throughout Zimbabwe; some have completed diploma courses in physiotherapy while others are undergoing training in Computer Programming at the Harare Polytechnic (Munozogara, 1989, 9 May, p. 2). These are the lucky ones. On the whole, although there are no statistics available on unemployment among blind primary and secondary school leavers, the prospects for employment of blind primary and secondary school leavers in Zimbabwe are very bleak (Addison, 1989, p. 6).

In May, 1981 the Placement Officer of the Jairos Jiri Association, Mr C.T. Tsikwa, said that it was virtually impossible to persuade employers to employ blind people in industry (Mdege 1981, 4 - 8 May, p. 3). This was echoed by the Chairman of the Council for the Blind, Dr E.H. Ashton. 'The question of employment for the blind', he reported in 1982, 'continues to be a difficult one, not only because of the absence of jobs but also because of the conservatism of employers' (Ashton, 5 August 1982 p.6).

In his Report of August, 1984 Dr Ashton's successor Mr C.B. Zharare, lamented the fact that the Council for the Blind had explored opportunities for gainful employment for the blind with 'a great sense of frustration'. He said little progress had been made in the employment of the blind for reasons 'compounded by world economic situations, but mainly rooted in prejudice'. He said that open employment was and remains 'difficult enough for even those that are able-bodied-enough to make the situation that much more difficult for disabled people'. He added:

This is despite the fact that there are many instances where efficiency is guaranteed ... because disabled workers tend to remain on the job consistently during work hours; experience pressure to prove their worth and therefore do more; and are less likely to change employment too often

because of scarcity of opportunities...The fact that Zimbabwe does not have legislation protecting the rights of the blind and disabled means that organizations such as ours have little effect as pressure groups (Zharare, 1984, 25 August, p. 4).

In his Report of 1986, Mr Zharare said pessimistically that the problems of blind school leavers continued without a clear indication that definite solutions would be found (Zharare, 1986, 13 September, p. 4).

It is quite clear that the task of finding employment for the blind in Zimbabwe is a daunting one. This being so, the Education Liaison Officer of the Council for the Blind, Mr W.K. Mdege, suggested firstly, that secondary and post-secondary education of the blind should be backed up by adequate vocational training facilities; secondly, research into avenues of employment should be carried out; thirdly, appropriate vocational guidance should be conducted by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education; fourthly, there should be a Regional multi-disciplinary assessment committee which should be responsible for both assessment and placement of blind persons (Mdege, 1988, p. 5).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this paper, I discussed the education of and prospects for employment for the blind in Zimbabwe from 1981 to 1987.

The education of the blind in Zimbabwe has been a joint effort between the Government and the Council for the Blind.

The Council for the Blind has contributed to the education of the blind in Zimbabwe in several respects. Firstly, it has transcribed school textbooks and final examination questions into Braille for blind students. The textbooks range from Grade 1 up

to University level. Secondly, it encourages Responsible School Authorities especially in areas where incidence of blindness is high, to accept the idea of integration of blind and sighted pupils in their schools. Thirdly, it has formed a partnership with Responsible School Authorities especially in building Resource Centres for blind students. Fourthly, it has launched a Sponsorship Scheme whereby it requests individuals and/or groups of people to sponsor blind children attending school in Zimbabwe by donating \$30 or more which will be spent on extra comforts for blind children. In addition to local sponsorship, the Council has initiated an Overseas Sponsorship Scheme whereby friends abroad sponsor blind children attending school in Zimbabwe. As a result, many individuals and groups of people in Zimbabwe and abroad, have sponsored many blind children.

The Government has also contributed enormously to the education of the blind in Zimbabwe. Firstly, it launched a national teacher training program for specialist teachers of the blind at the United College of Education in Bulawayo in January, 1983 in order to expand and extend the education of the blind. By April, 1988, 101 specialist teachers of the blind had gone through this training program. Secondly, it has organized vacation courses for specialist teachers of the blind. Thirdly, it pays in full the salaries of the specialist teachers of the blind. Fourthly, it provides grants to the Council for the Blind for the transcription of school textbooks into Braille for blind students. Fifthly, it actively promotes and encourages 'Open' or integrated education of blind and sighted pupils in all schools. As a result of these efforts, the enrolment of blind students in Zimbabwe began to increase rapidly between 1981 and 1987.

As the enrolment of blind students increased, there was a corresponding need to build more Resource Centres. These Resource Centres increased from ten in 1980 to 37 in July, 1987.

But much remains to be done. Bearing in mind that at least 10,000 blind children in Zimbabwe are of school-going age and that at present less than 1,000 are being catered for education-

ally, Government should provide the necessary financial resources if the national goal of 'Education for All', is to be achieved.

'Open' or integrated education has worked well in Zimbabwe not only at the primary and secondary school levels but also at the University of Zimbabwe where several blind students, inspite of a myriad of problems they faced, successfully completed their studies and found employment as teachers in ordinary schools.

While it has been relatively easy for blind graduates from the University of Zimbabwe to find employment, mostly in the teaching profession, blind primary and secondary school leavers face a Herculean task in finding gainful employment. The Council for the Blind has tried unsuccessfully, in season and out of season, to find gainful employment for these school leavers and has urged the Government to shoulder the responsibility not only for providing adequate vocational training facilities and appropriate vocational guidance for blind school leavers but also to make a concerted endeavour to find gainful employment for them. Unless the Government is prepared to do so, the prospects for gainful employment for blind school leavers, in spite of their diplomas, will continue to be as elusive as a mirage. This is not a prospect which a responsible government can view with equanimity.

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